

- (1) European Patent No. EP 0810030 A1 published December 3, 1997. This patent discloses a thermocycler apparatus suitable for performing the polymerase chain reaction comprising a metal sample block having an array of spaced-apart sample wells each of which has

an inside surface, said wells being provided with one or more capped sample tubes each containing a sample mixture placed in a microtiter plate having an uppermost edge, which plate is seated on said sample block, and a cover to enclose said capped sample tubes, which cover comprises a flat, horizontal rectangular portion and downwardly projecting skirt portions along the periphery thereof and further comprises a device for heating at least the underside of said horizontal portion, said cover being dimensioned to contact said sample block and to enclose said microtiter plate and capped sample tubes on said sample block when the tops of the caps on said sample tubes deform, due to the application of heat and a downwardly directed force on said cover.

- (2) European Patent No. EP 0 836 884 A2 published April 22, 1998. This patent is in German and there is no English equivalent.
- (3) European Patent No. EP 0 290 019 A2, entitled VIAL SEAL, By W. W. Jordan, published November 9, 1998. This patent discloses a vial seal which is provided for sealing a plurality of reagent-containing vials

seated in a reagent pack, the vial seal comprises a pliable cover having attached thereto a plurality of vial inserts for sealing a corresponding plurality of such vials. The pliable cover contains a corresponding plurality of openings which fit around the necks of the vials to allow the vial seal to remain with the vials at all times. The pliable cover contains a fastener which allows the vial seal to be held in a non-interfacing position with respect to the vial openings when the inserts are disengaged from the vials.

- (4) U.S. Patent No. 6,074,614, entitled MULTI-ASSAY PLATE VOWER FOR ELIMINATION OF MENISCUS, By Hafeman et al., patented June 13, 2000. This patent discloses a constant pathlength multi-assay plate cover for multi-assay plates, comprising, a flat top side and a flat bottom side, the bottom side having solid cylindrical projections of equal length extending downwardly from the flat bottom side, wherein each cylindrical projection is centered about the optical axis passing through a corresponding sample well of a multi-assay plate, thereby eliminating the meniscus and evaporation effects.

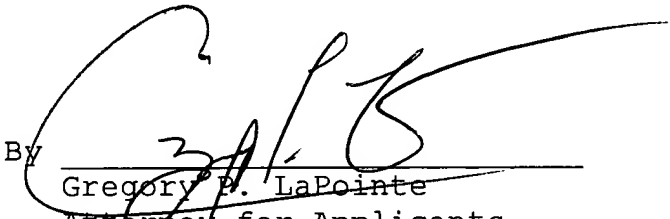
The undersigned submits the above-identified references for independent consideration by the Examiner and does not make any admission that these references are or are not material to the present invention or that these references are or are not prior art with respect to the present invention.

Respectfully submitted,

RONALD JOSEPHUS CLEMENS
WIJNSCHENK ET AL.

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(Date of Deposit)
Rachel Piscitelli
Name and Reg. No. of Attorney
Rachel Piscitelli
Signature
May 8, 2001
Date of Signature

By 
Gregory P. LaPointe
Attorney for Applicants
Reg. No.: 28,395
Tel: (203) 777-6628
Fax: (203) 865-0297

Date: May 8, 2001

Express Mail No.:
EL394337631US